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SCHAKOWSKY RESPONDS TO IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

"US MUST BEGIN TO WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM IRAQ NOW"

WASHINGTON, D.C.-U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a Chief Deputy Democratic Whip, today responded to the report issued by the Iraq Study Group. Schakowsky, who voted against the U.S. invasion of Iraq and is a founding member of the Congressional Out of Iraq Caucus, said, "While the panel's recommendations are thoughtful, the reality is our nation and our troops cannot afford to wait until 2008 to withdraw from Iraq."

Schakowsky's complete statement follows:

"We all owe the members of the Iraq Study Group our gratitude for their service to the nation. The panel has given serious thought to the situation on the ground in Iraq and to reasonable options for the road ahead.

"Unfortunately, the Bush Administration has left the United States with no good options in Iraq. We should not have been there in the first place, and a way out of Iraq is more difficult to achieve because President Bush has spent more energy and resources digging in his heels than he has spent listening to the American people, the military experts, and Congress.

"I agree with the report's finding that the U.S. mission in Iraq must dramatically change. I don't agree that our nation and our troops can afford to wait until 2008 to withdraw. The time to begin withdrawing our troops from Iraq has long since passed.

"As the Iraq Study Group stated, there is no path that guarantees success in Iraq. I will work hard to help clean up the mess created by President Bush's refusal to acknowledge the reality on the ground in Iraq and will always do whatever I can to support our troops and our veterans. But it will take an acknowledgement of mistakes made, and a decision by President Bush to finally work with the Congress and change course in Iraq if we are to salvage anything positive from this quagmire."

"As a member of the incoming Democratic majority in the House of Representatives, I will work to bring our troops home as soon as possible and to support efforts that will help the Iraqis to secure their country and rebuild their society."